

THE FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE APRIL 2006

"Caregiver's Corner Online" is an electronic newsletter produced by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act. Our goal is to send you information to support you as a family caregiver for an older adult.

IN THIS EDITION:

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1. LONG-DISTANCE CAREGIVING TIPS. If you live over an hour away and help in some way with your parent's care, you are a long-distance caregiver. Many long-distance caregivers provide emotional support and occasional respite to a primary caregiver who is in the home. Long-distance caregivers can play a part in arranging for professional caregivers, hiring home health aides, or locating assisted living and nursing home care. Some long-distance caregivers help a parent pay for care, while others step in to manage finances. Caregiving is not easy for anyone, not the caregiver or the care receiver. The most important task is to try to plan ahead before a crisis occurs.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

****Know what you need to know.** Learn as much as you can about your parent's medical care, finances, and daily routine. Make sure at least one member of the family has written permission to receive medical and financial information. Put together a notebook with vital information about health care, social services, contact numbers, financial issues, physicians, neighbors, etc.

****Plan your visits.** You can get more done and feel less stressed by talking to your parent ahead of time and finding out what he or she would like to do when you visit. Would your mother like to visit the mall or another family member? Could your father use help fixing

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things around the house? Would you like to accompany either one on a visit to the doctor? Decide on the priorities and leave other tasks to another visit.

****Remember to actually spend time visiting with your family member.** Try to do things unrelated to being a caregiver. Rent a movie, take your parent to a worship service, look at old photos and reminisce. Perhaps a car ride and a meal out would provide a change of scenery to someone who may no longer be driving.

****Get in touch and stay in touch.** Try to find people in your parent's community who can be your eyes and ears and provide a realistic view of what is going on. This may include the spouse, a physician, a neighbor, or a friend.

****Help your parent stay in contact.** Program telephone numbers into your parent's phone so he or she can speed-dial contacts. Get an emergency alert system in case of a fall, or an identification bracelet to wear on outings.

****Find out about resources in your parent's neighborhood.** Having a copy of the local phone book may be helpful. The "Blue Pages" provide listings of state and local government services. The local Area Agency on Aging can provide information about individual services and care managers who may be able to assist with coordinating services. If you don't have a local phone book, call the Eldercare Locator (1-800-677-1116) to reach the local Area Agency on Aging.

The Internet can be a valuable tool for researching local services. The local government may have a Web site providing information. To find out about services for seniors in Virginia, contact www.seniornavigator.org. For resources in this area, visit the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa or call 703-324-7948. We serve residents of Fairfax County, and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, and their caregivers.

Source: Portions of this article were excerpted from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) publication, "So Far Away-Twenty Questions for Long-Distance Caregivers." For a copy of this publication, visit the Web site at <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation> or call toll-free 1-800-222-2225.

To learn more about how to be an effective long-distance caregiver, attend the free seminar, "Long-Distance Caregiving." See "Reminder of Free Seminars..." listed in item number 5 of this newsletter for details.

2. SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS OF OLDER ADULTS.

****BenefitsCheckUp, www.benefitscheckup.org.** BenefitsCheckUp, a service of the National Council on the Aging, helps people connect to government programs that may help them pay for prescription drugs, health care, utilities, and other needs.

****Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org.** Call toll-free 1-800-272-3900.

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****Eldercare Locator**, <http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare/Public/Home.asp>.

Call toll-free 1-800-677-1116. Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, connects older Americans and their caregivers with sources of information on senior services in various regions of the country.

****Family Caregiver Alliance**, www.caregiver.org. Call toll-free 1-800-445-8106.

****National Alliance for Caregiving**, www.caregiving.org.

****National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers**, www.caremanager.org.

****National Family Caregivers Association**, www.nfcares.org. Call toll-free 1-800-896-3650.

For local resources, please contact the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, serving residents and their caregivers in Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax. Our Aging Information Specialists are available to assist you at 703-324-7948. Visit our web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa

3. APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH. The "ASA Connection," newsletter of the American Society on Aging reports: "The popular image of a person abusing alcohol often is that of a young adult, perhaps a college student, engaged in binge drinking at a house party or a local bar.

Statistical studies, however, have revealed some surprising facts:

Widowers over age 75 have the highest rate of alcoholism in the United States, and among older people, alcohol-related hospitalization rates are similar to those for heart attacks. What's more, 17 percent of older Americans over age 60 misuse alcohol or medications, and many more remain undiagnosed or untreated for their misuse and abuse of these substances."

If you are concerned about an older adult's use of alcohol and wish to talk to someone, call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Alcohol and Drug Services. You can reach Margaret Kollay at 703-934-8772.

4. NEW COUNTY ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCE. The Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs has launched "Fairfax County News to Use," a new online information resource for residents, community organizations, and businesses. Located at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news, the publication presents ongoing highlights of the county in one central location, including news articles, key links, photos, e-government resources, and calendars. Information about Fairfax County is now available to an expanded audience throughout the county, the state - and even the world.

For more information about "Fairfax County News to Use," contact the Office of Public Affairs at 703-324-3187, TTY 711, or publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov.

(Thanks to the "Golden Gazette" April 2006 edition, for the information in this article.)

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5. REMINDER OF FREE SEMINARS FOR CAREGIVERS OF OLDER ADULTS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE FAIRFAX CAREGIVER SEMINAR CONSORTIUM IN APRIL AND MAY.

--"Home is No Longer an Option...Now What?"

Tuesday, April 18, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace Street, Herndon

Speakers: Anne O'Neill, RN, Geriatric Care Manager; Rita Schumacher, Director, Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

--"Long-Distance Caregiving"

Wednesday, April 19, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale

Speaker: Cathy Cole, Director, ElderLink, Options for Caregiving

--"Navigating the Legal and Medicaid Maze
of Long Term Care"

Wednesday, April 26, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Lincolnia Adult Day Health Care Center, 4710 N. Chambliss Street, Alexandria

Speakers: Jean Galloway Ball, Elder Law Attorney; Nora Torres, Long-Term Care Benefits Supervisor, Fairfax County Department of Family Services

--"End of Life Decisions"

Tuesday, May 2, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Rm. 206-A, Fairfax

Speaker: Betsy Murphy, FNP, CHPN, Capital Hospice

--"Medicare Part D Made Easy"

Friday, May 5, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Fairfax County Govt. Center, 12000 Govt. Center Parkway, Fairfax--Rooms
9 & 10

Speaker: Howard Houghton, Virginia Insurance Counseling & Assistance Program, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

--"Protecting Your Loved One: Consumer
Protection, Financial Abuse, and Fraud"

Thursday, May 11, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Sully District Govt. Ctr., 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly--James McDonnell Room

Speakers: Thomas Polhemus, Investigator, Financial Crimes Unit; Lauren Marsnick and Tara West, Social Workers, Adult Protective Services

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--"Geriatric Mental Health/Medications
and Alcohol Use"

Thursday May 11, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Groveton Senior Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria -- Suite 325

Speakers: Susan Wolk, Team Leader, Program for Older Adults and Their Families;
Margaret Kollay, Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist

--"Legal and Financial Planning for Long Term Care"

Tuesday, May 16, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax

Speakers: A. Mark Christopher, Elder Law Attorney, Vaughan, Fincher & Sotelo, PC;
Thomas C. West, CLU, ChFC, Financial Advisor, Thomas West Financial Services

--"Humor for the Caregiver's Soul"

Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria

Speaker: Susan Stone, Outreach Coordinator, Alzheimer's Family Day Center

The Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium includes: Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Family Day Center, Thomas West Financial Services, Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services, Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Fairfax County Department of Health, Fairfax County Public Library. These seminars are sponsored with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

6. PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF "CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE" NEWSLETTER.

Current and past editions of the "Caregiver's Corner Online" newsletter are available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa/caregivers_corner_nl.htm.

For further information, please contact an Aging Information Specialist at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (telephone: 703-324-7948; TTY 703-449-1186 or e-mail: fairfax_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov). Visit our Web site at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa.
